THE PLAIN DEALER

China expands its efforts to contain deadly virus. A8

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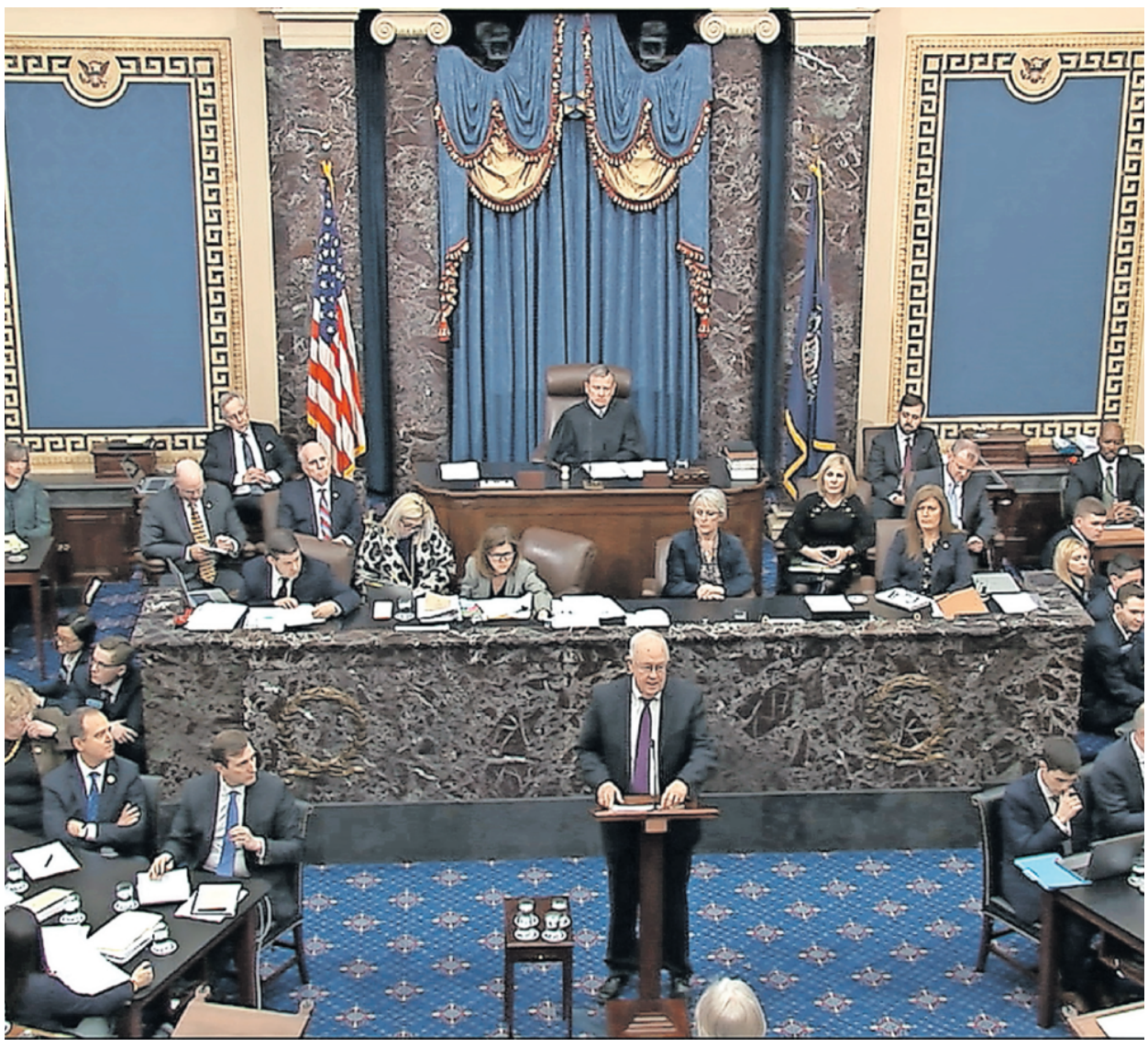
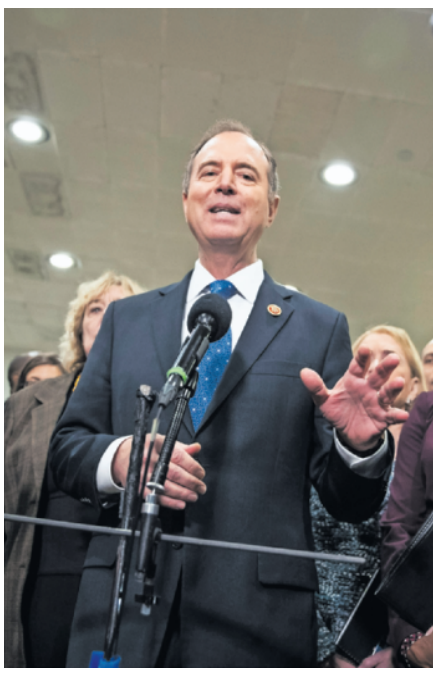
IMPEACHMENT SENATE TRIAL

Mounting pressure



President Donald Trump's legal team resumed its defense Monday in his Senate trial amid growing calls to hear testimony from former national security adviser John Bolton. The calls have been prompted by a report that Bolton's book manuscript says Trump directly tied the holdup of nearly $400 million in military assistance to Ukraine to investigations of Joe Biden and his son. Rep. Adam Schiff, who leads the House prosecution team, right, called Bolton's account a test for the senators sitting as jurors. *Reporting by Washington Post; top photo Senate Television via AP; at right Manuel Balce Ceneta, Associated Press*



Will Bolton's book change GOP minds? A4

STATEWIDE

Voucher explosion would halt under new compromise

Proposal would still increase the number going to middle-class families

Patrick O'Donnell *paodonnell@plaind.com*

Ohio's controversial voucher expansion will be put on hold for at least two years, under a much-anticipated proposal due to go to vote in the Ohio Senate Tuesday.

The proposal won't halt the growth of vouchers in Ohio, though. It would still increase the number of middle-class families who can use the tax-funded tuition aid to private schools by easing income-eligibility rules already in place.

But the compromise stalls a massive expansion of the main way students become eligible to use vouchers: the state report card grades of their public school. Grades of schools have fallen in recent years, so more public schools have been declared as failing because of tougher state test standards.

As a result, EdChoice voucher eligibility spread from 40 districts in 2018-'19, to 139 districts this ongoing school year, to 400 next fall. Even high-performing districts like Solon, Mayfield and Brecksville-Broadview Heights will have schools considered struggling and part of EdChoice by the fall.

Districts have complained that they will now have to pay millions next school year toward tuition of kids leaving their schools to go to private schools.

And they say schools are being declared as struggling based on minor state report card grades, or outdated ones, even when a school scores well overall.

The proposed amendment to House Bill 9 would put a two-year hold on declaring any more Ohio public schools as struggling and part of EdChoice. The amendment does not change any of the grade rules, which could come later.

The proposal will go before the Senate's higher education committee Tuesday morning, then a full Senate vote in the afternoon.

Whether the House will back the plan is still to be determined.

"We're continuing to work towards consensus on this issue, but no decisions have been made," House Speaker Larry Householder said through a spokesperson.

State Sen. Matt Dolan, a Chagrin Falls Republican who had proposed a different solution, said he is satisfied this compromise solves a key problem.

"That we had so many 'underperforming' schools was unacceptable," Dolan said. The report cards as a whole need changes, he said, along with EdChoice eligibility

SEE VOUCHER, A9

CUYAHOGA COUNTY

Indicted HR chief Douglas Dykes resigns

Courtney Astolfi *castolfi@cleveland.com*

Indicted Cuyahoga County human resources chief Douglas Dykes resigned Monday, days after it came to light that he quietly repaid the county more than $10,000 he is accused of stealing.

Dykes submitted his resignation Monday to Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish's Chief of Staff Bill Mason, more than a year after he was indicted on a felony charge of theft-in-office, among other charges. He has pleaded not guilty and is scheduled for trial in April.

Dykes in a letter to Budish and Mason said he must ensure the "sanity and health" of his family, and that his resignation did not stem from a belief that he had done anything wrong.

County spokeswoman Mary Louise Madigan declined to say whether Dykes shed any more light on his decision to repay the debt.

Dykes has remained as Budish's $180,000-a-year chief talent officer since his January 2019 indictment. He is accused of illegally switching a $13,500 moving expense for former IT official James Hay into a $15,000 signing bonus after Hay did not move from Cincinnati to Cleveland to take the county job.

Hay agreed to a repayment plan and has been paying off the money in monthly installments after a 2018 audit determined the bonus was "illegal."

Members of Budish's administration were set to meet with Dykes Monday morning following revelations last week that Dykes cut the county a $10,362 cashier's check on Jan. 14 that listed Hay's name as the "remitter." Dykes name did not appear on the check.

Neither Hay, nor Dykes' lawyer, Anthony Jordan, knew Dykes was making the payment. A county spokeswoman did not believe Dykes had informed anyone else at the county before he cut the check.

SEE DYKES, A9

Cuyahoga County human resources chief Douglas Dykes appears in court in 2019. On Monday, he submitted his resignation. *David Petkiewicz, cleveland.com*

Lotteries, A2 **Go & Do**, A2 **Metro**, A3 **Nation & World**, A4, 8 **Deaths**, A9 **Forum**, A10 **Sports**, B1 **TV listings**, B6

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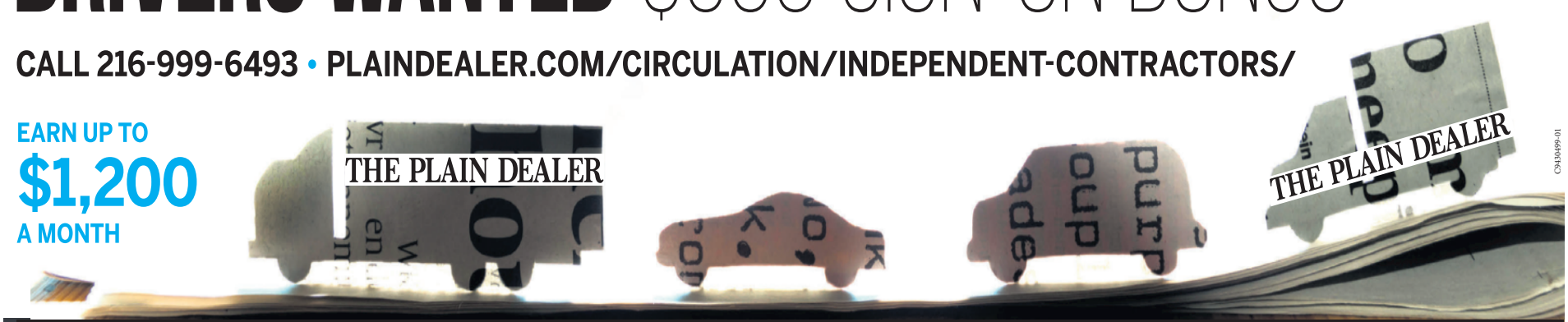

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